

# USGA POLICY ON GAMBLING

The Definition of an amateur golfer provides that an "amateur golfer," whether he plays competitively or recreationally, is one who plays golf for the challenges it presents, not as a profession and not for financial gain.

The distinction between playing for prize money, which violates the Rules of Amateur Status, and gambling, which does not, is essential to the Rules of Amateur Status. The USGA urges amateur golfers to seek USGA guidance whenever it is unclear whether the prize format constitutes playing for prize money or gambling and, in the absence of such guidance, not to play for cash prizes. Such a course of action would ensure that no one jeopardizes his amateur status.

The USGA does not object to informal gambling or wagering among individual golfers or teams of golfers when the players in general know each other, participation in the wagering is optional and is limited to the players, the sole source of all money won by the players is advanced by the players on themselves or their own teams and the amount of money involved is not generally considered excessive such that the primary purpose is the playing of the game for enjoyment.

On the other hand, organized events open to the general public and designed or promoted to create cash prizes are not approved by the USGA. Golfers participating in such events without first irrevocably waiving their right to prize money are deemed by the USGA to be playing for prize money, in breach of Rule 3-1.

The USGA is opposed to and urges its Member Clubs, all golf associations and all other sponsors of golf competitions to prohibit types of gambling such as: (1) Calcuttas, (2) other auction pools, (3) pari-mutuels and (4) any other forms of gambling organized for general participation or permitting participants to bet on someone other than themselves or their teams. The USGA may inform players they have forfeited their amateur status or deny entry in USGA Championships and membership on USGA teams for international competitions to players whose activities in connection with golf gambling, whether organized or individual, are considered by the USGA to be contrary to the best interests of golf.

## NCGA AMATEUR STATUS NOTIFICATION

Over the past year we received numerous calls regarding acceptable prizes at club events. Please note that cash prizes of any amount are a breach of Rule 3-1 of the Rules of Amateur Status. Any amateur who plays for cash prizes without waiving his right to the prizes, even in a private club event, would not be eligible to compete in NCGA, CGA or USGA qualifying or championships.

In view of the above, we urge you to change the prize format in the competitions conducted at your club so as to conform to the Rules of Amateur status for any competitions where cash prizes are awarded. This can be done by offering merchandise or prize vouchers redeemable for merchandise of a retail value not greater than \$750 instead of cash. This course of action will ensure that no one jeopardizes his amateur status.

At the least, we ask that you advise the players of their forfeiture of amateur status if they play for cash prizes, and offer them the opportunity to waive their right to any prize money before playing. Waivers for amateurs who wish to waive their right to prize money in order to play in an event offering cash prizes are available at [www.usga.org/rules/amateurstatus/Amateur-Status/](http://www.usga.org/rules/amateurstatus/Amateur-Status/)

In the Rules of Golf (2012-2015) review pages 163-181, Rules of Amateur Status as approved by the USGA and the R&A